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**Literary history  
"Tale of the death in the Horde  
of Prince Michael of Chernihiv  
and the boyar Fedor"**

Kyiv, August 10 – December 7, 2021

## Notes for the readers

This document contain shortened english version of my work. It can be freely downloaded from my personal site, from HTML version of work, by URL [www.M-Zharkikh.name/en/History/Monographs/SkazMyxFed.html](http://www.M-Zharkikh.name/en/History/Monographs/SkazMyxFed.html)  
HTML version can be slightly modified and corrected.

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On September 20, 1246, Prince Michael Vsevolodovich, who once ruled in Chernihiv, and his boyar Fedor were executed in the Horde by order of Batu. This event impressed contemporaries and descendants, and was reflected not only in short records of contemporaries, but also in much longer later texts, which are generally called "Tale of the Death in the Horde of Prince Michael of Chernihiv and Boyar Fedor" (SMF).

This Tale had long and interesting **literary** history that is worth exploring in some detail.

Looking ahead, I would like to say that although the SMF is used by historians as a source of factual information about the event of 1246, it is in fact a purely literary work, valuable only to the literary historian and historiographer. The actual data available in it do not exceed what our contemporaries told us. From the SMF you can see how literary tastes and literary techniques have developed, as well as how the view of the events of the mid-13th century has changed over the centuries.

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## Early source information

Early records of the death of Prince Michael Vsevolodovich, dating from the middle of the 13th century, do not have the characteristics of the later SMF, but they served as material for the SMF.

Therefore, I consider it appropriate to present here again these generally well-known and easily accessible texts, to which I will refer many times.

Hypatian Chronicle

Laurentian Chronicle

John of Plano Carpini

Wilhelm Rubruk

## The ideas of the origin of "Tale"

**Nikolay Il'yich Serebryansky** (1872 – 1940) in his book "[Ancient Russian princely lives](#)» [Moscow: 1915] devoted a whole 2nd chapter (pp. 32 – 55) to the Tale of Michael and Fedor and published a number of valuable texts of the work (pp. 49 – 86) in the appendices.

Encyclopedic article by **Lev Alexandrovich Dmitriev** (1921 – 1993) [*Dmitriev L. A. The legend of the murder in the horde of Prince Mikhail of Chernihiv and his boyar Theodore. – "Dictionary of Librarians and Literature of Ancient Russia", Leningrad, 1989, vol. 2, part 2, with. 412 – 416*].

The next version of the origin of the SMF submitted **Boris Mikhailovich Kloss** (b. 1932) – also in the form of a reference article [*Kloss B. M. Life of Prince Michael of Chernihiv. – «Written monuments history of ancient Russia. Annotated catalog-reference book", St. Petersburg, 2003, p. 208 – 211*].

**Olga Viktorivna Loseva** (1971 – 2017) in his study of Prologue [*Loseva O. V. Lives of Russian saints as a part of ancient Russian Prologues of XII – the first third of XV centuries. – Moscow: Manuscripts of Ancient Russia, 2009*] did not deal specifically with the SMF, but gave valuable observations on the early texts of the SMF and their new publication [reasoning on p. 191 – 193, 244 – 245, 251; texts of p. 294 – 312].

## Rostov text

Given the importance of the early Rostov text (S-1) of the SMF, I compare here the two oldest copies:

**S-1-161** – Prologue RGADA Typ. № 161 2nd half 14 cent. [date not substantiated and not confirmed!], published by O. Loseva [*Loseva OV [Lives of Russian saints](#)* as a part of ancient Russian Prologues of XII – the first third of XV centuries. – Moscow: Manuscripts of Ancient Russia, 2009, p. 294 – 297; summed up options S-1-153].

**S-1-153** – Prologue RGADA Typ № 153 late 14 (?) – 1 half 15 cent. [date not substantiated and not confirmed!], published by N. Serebryansky [NIS-2, p. 50 – 51; summed up options S-1-161].

Comparison table (78 episodes).

The origin of S-1 I imagine as follows:

1. "Note on the memory of Michael" originated in Rostov in the 1270s.
2. Protograph S-1, built on the basis of a hypothetical protograph S-0 (about this [I will speak further](#)), using the Bible, the Tale of Boris and Gleb and "Note on the memory of Michael", also written in Rostov, but the time can not be outlined (late 13 – 1 half 14 century).
3. The earliest copies – S-1-161 (worst) and S-1-153 (best) were independently copied from the protograph.

## Long Prologue texts

Long Prologue texts published by N. Serebryansky form a rather close group.

**S-2** – "version named after Andrew" by N. I. Serebryansky. The text is preserved in a single copy of the National Library, Sof. № 1365. Date of the copy according to Serebryansky – 14 – 15 centuries, according to O. Loseva – 1st half 15 cent. (not justified!). Published by: NIS-2, p. 55 – 58 (I used this edition); also published in:

[Monuments of literature of ancient Russia](#). 13 cent. – M.: 1981, p. 228 – 235;  
Ancient Russian princely lives / V. V. Kuskov – M.: Krug, 2001, p. 184 – 187;  
Library of Literature of Ancient Russia, vol. 5 (13th century) – St. Petersburg, 2000, [p. 156 – 162](#).

**S-3** – "version named after John" by N. I. Serebryansky. Published by him from the copy of late 14 cent. from the library of A. S. Uvarov № 613, with options for 3 other copies: NIS-2, p. 59 – 63.

**S-4** – "abbreviated version named after John" by N. I. Serebryansky. Published by him according to the copy of the Prologue from the Rumyantsev Museum, Undolsky collection № 227 (16th century), with variants according to the manuscript of the same museum, Piskarev's collection № 527 (16th century): NIS-2, p. 68 – 70.

**S-5** – "extended version named after Andrew" by N. I. Serebryansky. I present separately the texts of the two oldest copies:

**S-5-239** – Prologue of the short edition of the GIM, Synod. № 239. Date according to Serebryansky – 14th century, according to Loseva – 1313 (not substantiated, in my opinion – 1st half of 14th century). I submit it according to the publication of O. Loseva [*Loseva OV [Lives of Russian saints](#)* as a part of ancient Russian Prologues of XII – the first third of XV centuries. – Moscow: Manuscripts of Ancient Russia, 2009, p. 298 – 309; summed up options S-5-159].

**S-5-159** – Prologue of the short edition of RGADA, Synod. № 159. Date according to Serebryansky – 14th century, according to Loseva – 1329 (not substantiated). I am applying for NIS-2, p. 63 – 68 (summed up options S-5-239).

Comparative table (78 episodes).

## **Textological analysis of long Prologue texts**

What an long Prologue text  
closer to the original?

What is characteristic in S-2?

Text S-3

Text S-4

Comparison of S-5 copies

What is characteristic in S-5?

Western Russian copy S-5

The connection of long Prologue text with the Rostov text

### **Prototypes of long Prologue text**

Absolutely necessary, but very trivial and boring analysis of the slightest differences between the various versions of the long Prologue texts led us to the conclusion that the closest to the probable protograph of the work is the version S-2 (excluding if necessary its individual features). Now we can finally move on to the study of S-2 from the literary point of view.

A Word about Tatar captivity

Protograph of the SMF

Thus, the idea of a joint protograph expressed by L. A. Dmitriev acquires some specific features. It is not necessary to imagine that S-1 is a direct reduction, and S-2 is an extension of S-0. For both works, this protograph served as a depot of building materials, and the authors of S-1 and S-2 used the obtained material to construct their own works, where other sources were used, separate for S-1 and S-2.

### **Literary analysis of long Prologue text**

The idea of the work can be considered a desire to bring the story of Michael to the archetypal for Christians description of suffering – to the passions of Jesus Christ. In the role of Christ here is Prince Michael, in the role of Pilate – Batu, in the role of the Apostle Peter – Prince Boris.

Michael and Fedor in the long Prologue text naturally perish, because they are on the verge of a clash of two irreconcilably hostile worlds – the victorious Tatar and defeated Christian (Rus'). Neither literary Tatars can yield to principles and tolerate Christians, nor ideal literary Christians can deviate from their faith. The situation as it is depicted in the long Prologue text does not know halftones and leaves no room for maneuver, for compromise. As a result, each side achieved what it wanted: Batu destroyed the rebellious prince, and Michael and Fedor secured a good place in the "world of eternity" among the saints.

What is the significance of long Prologue text?

The answer depends on the reader's point of view.

In terms of **historian and source researcher**, who is looking for sources to cover the events of the mid-13th century – long Prologue text is not of interest due to its remoteness from the time of the event (60 – 80 years) and overloaded with samples borrowed from the literature. Long Prologue text is a conveniently composed hagiographic (by no means historical!) Work, written with talent, but not a historical source. Those historians who use it to reconstruct specific events fall into a methodological error – using the text without first finding out its source value.

We enjoy reading "War and Peace", but we look at it as a literary work and do not use it as a source for the history of the Napoleonic Wars. I do not quite understand why long Prologue text is not treated in the same way.

For **historiography and history of public opinion** long Prologue text is of full interest. From it we learn how was imagined the tragedy of Michael in northeastern Russia in the 14th century. But here, too, the view of the RPT / SMF as a work that called for resistance, for the struggle against the Tatars suffers from an anachronistic transfer of ideas of historians of the 19th – 21st centuries in ancient times. According to the witty observations of Vladimir Rudakov, the Tatars were perceived by Russian scribes of the 13th century as God's punishment for sins, which immediately excludes the possibility of resistance [*Rudakov V. N. [Mongol-Tatars](#) through the eyes of ancient Russian scribes of the mid 13 – 15 centuries. – M.: Quadriga, 2009*]. Resisting God's will is not only insignificant and not only hopeless, but also **sinful**. In the long Prologue text this sinfulness is mentioned very briefly and powerfully developed only in Leo the Philologist in the 16th century. But traces of the ideas noted by Rudakov can be seen in the long Prologue text.

## Short Prologue texts (14 – 15 centuries)

Short Prologue texts take up only a few lines. Two of them were published by N. Serebryansky.

O. Loseva published 3 more records.

In general, there can be no doubt that short Prologue texts arose as an abbreviation of long Prologue texts (directly or through other abbreviations).

## Long chronicle texts (15th century)

The SMF was involved in the Great Russian chronicle writing relatively late, only at the beginning of the 15th century, but earlier than the time when Pakhomi Serb was writing. The texts of this group will be abbreviated as RLT.

**S1LSI** – Sophia 1st Chronicle older recension [PSRL, 2000, vol. 6, no. 1, stb. 318 – 325]. This chronicle has come down to us in two copies from the turn of the 1470s and 1480s. The publication was based on the Obolensky's copy, and Karamzin's copy used for options. The SMF is presented more fully in Karamzin's copy, and somewhat abbreviated in Obolensky's copy, so for our special purpose, I restore the variants of Karamzin's copy, noting the significant variants of Obolensky's copy in the notes. Differences from the S-5 variant are highlighted in bold, except for the systematic titling of Michael as a grand duke or just a prince, and Fedor as a "his boyar" in those places where the S-5 give just a names.

**N1LMI** – Novgorod 1st Chronicle younger recension [Novgorod's first chronicle of senior and junior recensions. – M.-Lg.: 1950, [p. 298 – 303](#)]. Since the SMF here comes from S-5, I find it impractical to outline numerous discrepancies with S-5.



**MS1492** – Moscow codex of 1492 [PSRL, 1949, vol. 25, p. 136 – 139]. There is outlined a discrepancy with S1LSI.

**VPL** – Vologda-Perm Chronicle [PSRL, 1959, vol. 26, p. 82 – 85].

Comparative table (78 episodes).

## **Remarks on the long chronicle texts of the 15th century**

Long stories in the chronicles were typically transcribed without much change, later scribes tried to accurately reproduce the previous text. All the more surprising is the chronicle text of the SMF, which shows great variability, as if "inherited" from the variability of Prologue texts.

Consider first the 4 oldest texts that come from chronicles completed no later than the end of the 15th century.

The text of the Sophia 1st Chronicle older recension

The text of the Novgorod 1st Chronicle younger recension

The text of the Moscow codex of 1492

The text of the Vologda-Perm chronicle

In general, the chronicle texts of the SMF are a rather strange picture of the involvement in the chronicle of a large foreign story of non-chronicle origin.

## **Texts of Pachomius Serb**

The next group of long texts is derived from the text compiled by Pachomius Serb († after 1484). An indication of the authorship of Pachomius seems to be contained only in one list S-7 (Rumyantsev Museum № 565): "Creation of the hieromonk Pachomius Holy Mountains" [NIS-2, p. 179].

The original work of Pachomius is unknown, the following texts contain significant differences.

**S-6** – "Archival version" by N. I. Serebryansky [NIS-2, p. 71 – 79].

**S-7** – "Menaion version" by N. I. Serebryansky [The Great Menaion, collected by the All-Russian Metropolitan Macarius. – St. Petersburg: published by the Archaeographic Commission, 1869, [issue 2]: September, days 14-24, [col. 1298](#) – 1305].

**S-8** – "Solovetsky version" by N. I. Serebryansky [NIS-2, p. 71 – 79, in options to S-6].

**S-9** – "special Prologue version" by N. I. Serebryansky [NIS-2, p. 53 – 55].

Comparative table (78 episodes).

## **Textological analysis of Pachomius Serb's texts**

A group of texts originating from the unknown protograph by Pachomius Serb shows a clear closeness to each other and a clear distance from other texts of the SMF. These texts in general will be abbreviated as "texts of Pachomius Serb" (TPS).

Features of structure and content

Convergence and divergence of texts S-6 – S-8



Individual features of the text S-6  
and common features (S-7 + S-8)

Individual features of the text S-7  
and common features (S-6 + S-8)

Individual features of the text S-8  
and common features (S-6 + S-7)

## **The origin of the Pachomius Serb's texts**

My hypothesis is that the text S-6 was the first to appear. Then, I suppose, Pachomius was asked for more SMF copies, and he, as the author, feeling the power over his own text, not only rewrote his work, but partially reworked it. Thus, on the basis of S-6 there were formed texts S-7 and S-8.

Since it is for the S-7 that we have a direct indication of the authorship of Pachomius, we can extend it to all TPS groups.

The text of S-6 shows a clear connection with the text of the SMF in the MS1492. This connection can be traced back to episode M-5 with the erroneous pedigree of Michael.

## **Literary analysis of Pachomius Serb's texts**

### **A new work in a new genre**

This is a work **new genre**. Unlike the long Prologue and chronical texts, written in the genre of "passions" (stories of Christian martyrdom) and designed for individual reading, TPS is an oratory or church sermon.

In the TPS we have a drama-morality on the theme "the ruler must be prudent and make fatal decisions only on the basis of a comprehensive study of the case." From the definition of TPS as a "comedy of errors" saves only the death of the persons (from this finale Pachomius did not dare to retreat).

Thus, TPS is not just a new modification of the SMF, but a new work on the same theme, which departs from the long Prologue text somewhere just as Byron's poem "Don Juan" departs from Mozart's opera of the same name (well, from the libretto by L. da Ponte for this opera).

### **Abbreviated text S-9**

#### **Historiography**

*Karbasova T. B., Milyutenko N. I. [Pachomius Serb at work](#) over the hagiographic cycle dedicated to Michael and Theodore of Chernihiv. – Proceedings of the Department of Ancient Russian Literature, 2019, vol. 66, p. 211 – 242.*

*N. I. Milyutenko [Chronicle sources of the lives of Pachomius Serb](#) (Logofet). – Ancient Russia. Questions of Medieval Studies, 2019, № 2 (76), p. 5 – 12.*

### **Short chronicle texts**

Short chronicle texts are presented in four chronicles. They are all very similar to each other, up to the borrowing of explicit errors.

**EL** – Ermolin Chronicle [PSRL, 1910, vol. 23, p. 81].

**L72JaSI** – Chronicle of the 72nd language of the senior recension [PSRL, 1962, vol. 28, p. 56].

**L72JaMI** – Chronicle of the 72nd language of the younger recension [PSRL, 1962, vol. 28, p. 214].

**NLD** – Dubrovsky's Novgorod Chronicle [PSRL, 2004, vol. 43, p. 95].

Comparative table (78 episodes).

All copies contain the same set of 16 episodes (62 episodes missed).

Since it is believed that the Ermolin Chronicle is based on GZ1460, it should be assumed that the abbreviated text of the SMF in the EL is also formed from this codex. However, the comparison of EL with MS1492 does not show anything peculiar only to MS1492 – in the same way the text of EL could be formed by reducing S1LSI. Therefore, I accept the origin of short chronicle texts from the codex of the 1460s only conditionally.

The only feature of short chronicle texts is the episode M-68, in which the Tatars try to seduce Fedor, and he insults the Tatar faith – this was not in any of the previous texts.

### **Long chronicle texts (16th century)**

**TverL** – Tver Chronicle [PSRL, 1863, vol. 15, [stb. 386 – 393](#)].

**VL** – Resurrection Chronicle [PSRL, 1856, vol. 7, p. 152 – 156].

**KholmogogL** – Kholmogory Chronicle [PSRL, 1977, vol. 33, p. 69 – 71].

Comparison table (78 episodes).

### **Remarks on the long chronicle texts of the 16th century**

After all that has been said above about the origin of earlier texts of the SMF, the analysis of chronicle texts of the 16th century seems a very simple matter.

Text of the Tver Chronicle

The text of the Resurrection Chronicle

The text of the Kholmogory Chronicle

In general, all the considered chronicle texts of the 16th century are variations of long Prologue texts, which do not add anything new to the content and idea of the work.

### **"Nikon's" texts**

It should be noted that Patriarch Nikon had nothing to do with writing the Nikon's Chronicle or rewriting it, so we take the name "Nikon" for this group of texts in quotation marks. In the Chronograph the text of Nikon's chronicle is given in strong abbreviation.

**NikL** – Nikon's Chronicle [PSRL, 1885, vol. 10, p. 130 – 133].

**Chronograph** – Chronograph of the 1512 version [PSRL, 1911, vol. 22, vol. 1, p. 399 – 400].

Comparison table (82 episodes).

Structurally, the version of the text in NikL belongs to the group "long Prologue texts", the differences are the expansion of the introduction due to the wider use of the story of Batu's campaign (in particular, the insert episode M-4a), increased sentimentality and in the general dilution of the text with eloquent inserts, as is usually the case in NikL.

In general, the reworking of NikL turned out to be much longer and more eloquent, but meaningfully helpless, unsuccessful. Borrowings from Pachomius Serb, made without a clear understanding of the purpose of the quoted passages, do not improve, but only confuse the text. The author of NikL obviously did not bother to think about what new idea he wanted to express in his version, so he made only local changes, which sometimes make even a comic impression.

The chronograph is considered a work of the early 16th century, and the published text is called the "version of 1512". But the oldest chronograph copy contains events up to 1538, and was written no earlier than this year. The text of the SMF in the chronograph is obviously an abbreviation and a small revision of the text of NikL, without the use of other sources.

## **Eulogy by Leo Philologist**

The eulogy of Leo Philologist in honor of Michael and Fedor (PSLF) did not attract the attention of SMF researchers, as it turned out – in vain.

Little is known about Leo. He is a native of Serbia (as well as Pachomius), worked in the Moscow state in the first half of the 16th century. His indisputable works are eulogies (1) to Michael and Fedor and (2) to Zosima and Savati Solovetsky. [*Dmitrieva R. P. [Leo Philologist](#). – Dictionary of Librarians and Literature of Ancient Russia, Leningrad, 1989, vol. 2, part 2]*

### **History of writing the work by Leo Philologist**

#### **Sources of the work by Leo Philologist**

From the texts of the SMF Lev indisputably used NikL and some of the texts of Pachomius Serb (probably S-8).

#### **Additional sources of the work by Leo Philologist**

"Tale of the Princes of Vladimir".

"Tale of victory over the Volga Bulgarians."

#### **The ideological direction of the work by Leo Philologist**

The picture of Michael's feat unfolds in PSLF in two dimensions – earthly and heavenly:

Act	Earthly (real) world	Heavenly (supernatural) world
The reason for the ruin from the Tatars	Batu's attack	sins: envy, pride, untruth
Evil force	King Batu	Devil
Michael's refusal	disobedience to the king	victory over the devil
Because of this refusal	Batu later left to demand apostasy from the Rus' princes	Michael saved the entire Orthodox Church

Leo in his work leads the reader to believe that Michael was at the crossroads of not only earthly political forces but also supernatural forces of good and evil, and his action not only saved his own soul from hell, not only proved to be a worthy descendant of ancient martyrs of Christianity, but and turned the history of all of Rus' towards Orthodoxy and autocracy.

The idea of the work is majestic and important, and its verbal design is magnificent and solemn.

## **Texts of the Degree Book**

**DegreeBk** – Book of Royal Degrees [PSRL, 1908, vol. 21, part 1, p. 267 – 277].

**LLZ** – Illustrated chronicle. The text of the SMF from the Laptev volume of this chronicle is presented as an appendix to the Nikon Chronicle [PSRL, 1885, vol. 10, p. 237 – 244].

Comparison table (88 episodes).

## **Remarks on the texts of the Degree Book**

Andrew (Athanasius) – the author of the Degree Book

### **Tale of Michael and Fedor in the Book of Degrees**

Andrew generously borrowed fragments from PSLF. The influence of PSLF was also manifested in the systematic titling of Fedor *synlitic*, and in M-70 it is named also *ascetic* – this characteristic word is used in PSLF at least three times.

Andrew's goal was to preserve the factual basis of the story, as befits a historical work, and to decorate it with magnificent rhetoric, as required by the literary tastes of his time.

### **Tale of Michael and Fedor in the Illustrated Chronicle**

In general, the version of Illustrated Chronicle, significantly deviating from its prototype, did not show much literary skill. The purpose of the revision, as in most cases with the SMF, remained unclear to me.

It should also be noted that the variants of the SMF, derived from the Nikon's Chronicle, are all marked by increasingly sharp anti-Tatar rhetoric. I do not give examples, there are enough of them even in the extracts made above.

## **Chudov's text**

We have a Chudov's text of the SMF in the only copy of the 16th century, which comes from the collection of the Moscow Chudov Monastery (Miracle of Archangel Michael in Hona; located in the Moscow Kremlin). It was published by N. I. Serebryansky [NIS-2, p. 80 – 86] and devoted much of his research to it [h. 1, p. 49 – 55]. On the stemma, I mark it as S-10.

Serebryansky rightly noted that the text of S-10 is based on S-3, with significant additions from S-7. This is confirmed by my observations:

Comparative table (78 episodes).

If one give meaning to the name form *George* and to see here the influence of the Degree Book, the Chudov's text could be dated to the last third of the 16th century. The purpose of this revision is quite unclear. It seems that the author really wanted to write somewhere these insert stories, and did not find a better place for this than the Tale of Michael and Fedor.

## **Short Prologue texts (16th – 17th centuries)**

Late short Prologue texts (16th – 17th centuries), in contrast to the early short texts discussed above, arose from the need to reduce the SMF to the size of a typical Prologue article.

We have two such abbreviations, one comes from the manuscripts of the 16th century and was published by N. I. Serebryansky under the title "All-Russian edition of the SMF" [NIS-2, p. 52]. I refer to this variant as S-11. Later, a version of the printed Prologue (S-12) was written using it.

The SMF first reached printing press in Moscow in 1642. The first volume Prologue (September-February) was published there in 1641. Without finishing this edition, the printers started a new one in 1642, which included more than 20 articles about Russian saints, including the SMF we need, which I abbreviate as S-12. In 1643 the second volume of this edition was published (March – August).

Comparison table (78 episodes).

### Short text S-11

S-11 is an abbreviation of chronicle texts, most likely S1LSI. Having before him the chronicle, the author of S-11 could take from it the date of Batu's campaign, without resorting to other versions of the SMF.

### Short text S-12

The author of the S-12 created a greatly abbreviated combined edition, which in the beginning quite clearly followed the S-11, and then switched to TPS. With this reduction completely fell Eldega, the king does everything himself. Michael's political declaration was also dropped, leaving only his refusal to worship. Due to this reduction in S-12 there are no characteristic structural features.

## Text by Dimitry Tuptalo

Dimitry is the author of the Menaion for reading

Analysis of the text by Dimitry

The idea of the text by Dimitry

Observations show that Dimitry actually used the Macarius' Great Menaion for reading (S-7) and the Tver Chronicle, which he called the Pechersk Chronicle after the place where the book was kept (not according to its contents). He himself mentioned these sources at the beginning of the work. To these must be added the not explicitly mentioned "Synopsis".

Structurally, the Dimitry's text is a variant of the text of Pachomius Serb, but the text of S-7 in the hands of Dimitri has undergone significant changes, almost every episode has been reworked, somewhat shortened, somewhat supplemented. Significant historical additions have been made, and a number of minor episodes have been omitted.

The result of reading Dimitry's text should have been the impression: one king – one state – one church. And all this is Russian, which has existed since ancient times. If this is considered to be the leading idea of the whole Dimitry's text, it was attached to the Tale of Michael and Fedor mechanically and inappropriately.

### Studies on the text by Dimitry

D. I. Abramovich (1873 – 1955) in his article "Chronicle sources of Menaion for reading by Dimitry Rostovsky" [[Scientific collection for the year 1929](#), K., 1929, p. 32 – 61] devoted the last, 6th paragraph to our text [p. 57 – 61].

### Reworks of the text by Dimitry

## **The influence of "Tale" on later texts**

This topic does not belong to the literary history of the SMF as such, so I just note the moments that happened along the way, without trying to exhaust the topic.

The death of Prince Roman of Ryazan

Anti-Tatar journalism

Tatar ruin

Life of Prince Alexander Nevsky

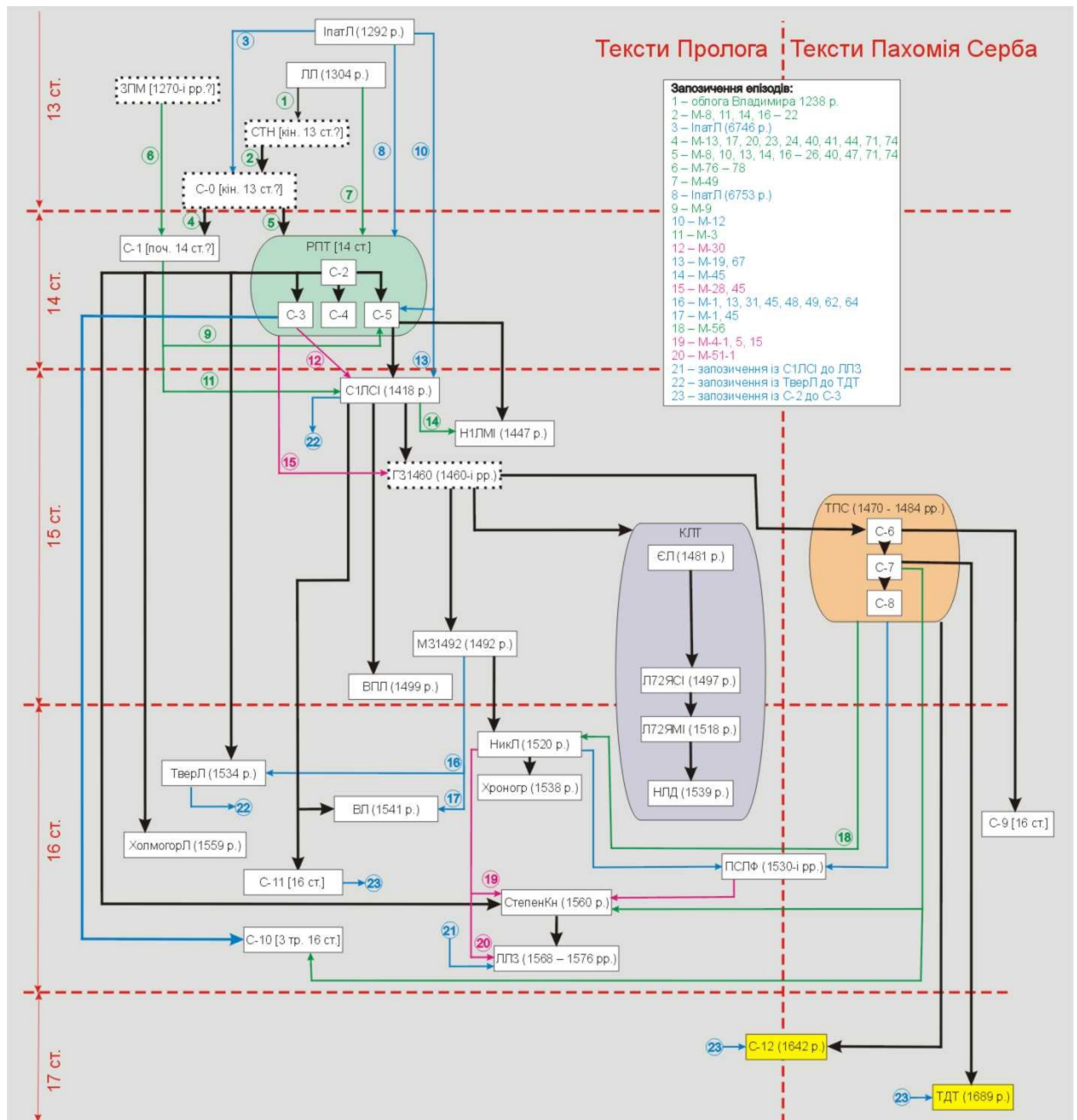
Part of the SMF continued its life in the literature of the Moscow state as part of the life of Alexander Nevsky.

## **General observations**

Dependence of texts

Observations of the texts of the SMF can be summarized in the form of the following stemma, which turned out to be more complex and richer than imagined by the previous authors.





*Stemma of SMF versions according to N. Zharkikh*

It should be considered without haste and taking into account the following notations:

- vertical dotted red line divides all texts into two groups according to the structure of episodes: on the left – the structure of the Prologue, on the right – the structure of the TPS. Directly on the separate line placed PSLF and S-12, which do not belong to any of the groups and do not form a third structural group;

- horizontal dotted red lines divide the centuries marked on the left;
- rectangles with a dotted contour show hypothetical protographs;
- rectangles with a solid contour show the really known texts;
- rectangles with a white background show the manuscripts;
- rectangles with a yellow background show printed texts;
- rectangles with rounded corners and colored backgrounds cover groups of related texts;



- thick black lines with arrows indicate the borrowing of the bulk of the episodes; the same thick line from S-3 to S-10 had to be made blue so that there was no ambiguity when crossing thick lines;
- thin colored lines indicate the borrowing of a small number of episodes signed in a text block. The difference in the colors does not carry the content, made only to avoid doubt when crossing such lines;
- in the last three places (21 – 23) it was necessary to refuse to carry out connecting lines, marking only their beginning and end, as is done on complex radio circuits;
- captions in parentheses indicate certain dates (last event in the chronicle or date of printing);
- captions in square brackets indicate approximate dates.

The stemma does not show any other written sources, except the Laurentian and Hypatian Chronicles, because it turned out to be very complicated.

The stemma shows two shortcomings of previous studies:

1. Ignoring (superficial consideration) the chronicle texts of the SMF, which gave many new options and had an impact on later texts.
2. The eulogy by Leo Philologist was ignored, which was not only valuable in itself, but also influenced later texts.

## Techniques for varying texts

### Classification of texts

#### Regional variants

#### Sources for compiling "Tale"

The main sources for writing early versions of the SMF were the Laurentian and Hypatian chronicles, known in those parts where it was about the campaign of Batu and the death of Prince Michael.

This information was very sparse, and it is natural that the authors of the SMF disseminated it, on the one hand, borrowings from other hagiographic works, on the other – the fruits of their own imagination.

#### The significance of "Tale" as a historical source

From all this it follows that the SMF is not any historical source – only a monument of historiography and literature.

This is not surprising for hagiography: all, without exception, the lives of saints from the time of early Christianity were written several centuries after the death of their heroes and, like the SMF, reflect the realities and ideas of the time of writing, not the time when saints had lived.

Although not a century but decades passed from Michael's death to the appearance of the SMF, this was enough to make the real details of the event partly forgotten and partly offset by the powerful influence of established hagiographic stamps.

Thus, the historiography researcher can trace on the basis of the SMF, how views on the events of Batu's time have developed in the past – only the sequence of epithets attached to Batu may already be interesting.

A literary historian can trace the development of rhetoric and stylistics of ancient Great Russian literature on the basis of the SMF.

Finally, the historian of religious and political ideas, which changed from older versions of the SMF to later ones, can find some food here.

And only a pure historian of the events of the 13th century will not find any food here. Therefore, I warn such historians against using the SMF as a source, so as not to transfer to the 13th century realities and ideas of ancient hagiographers and / or later authors of 14 – 17 centuries.

## **Conclusions**

1. The following shortcomings of previous research on the origin of the texts "Tale of the death in the Horde of Prince Michael of Chernihiv and the boyar Fedor" (SMF):

1.1. Insufficient attention to the chronicle versions of the SMF;

1.2. Complete disregard for the "Eulogy" by Leo Philologist.

This has led to a simplistic and sometimes misconception about the relationship between different SMF variants.

2. The classification of texts should be based on their structure, ie the composition and sequence of episodes. The similarity / difference of structure is of paramount importance in the study of the origin of texts, and the similarity / difference of individual words and phrases is insignificant.

3. There are two main structural types of SMF: long Prologue texts (RPT) and the text by Pachomius Serb (TPS). In TPS, a whole group of episodes of RPT has been moved to a new place below.

The three texts have a special structure and do not belong to the outlined types.

4. There are 4 separate works on the topic of SMF, based on the same facts, but with different ideas:

4.1. All texts of the structural type of RPT are variants of one work. Its idea is the collision of two irreconcilable principles or worlds: the firm will of King Batu encounters the same firm resistance of Michael. This clash naturally leads to the death of the martyrs.

4.2. Similarly, all texts of the structural type of TPS are variants of one other work. The reason for Michael's death was not his firmness in the faith, but false information given to the king, as if Michael disgraced the Tatar faith. This makes the death of the martyrs somewhat accidental, although it does not affect the end result.

The main variant of the work has three versions, all of which were probably created by Pakhomije Serb himself. Dimitry Tuptalo wrote a special version of this work in the late 17th century, expanding the local Kyiv context of events and emphasizing "Russian land" and "Russian princes" throughout the text. This idea of Russian national patriotism is superfluous for the history of Michael and Fedor, but important for Dimitry.

4.3. The oldest (late 13th century) Rostov work (S-1) has a special structure and idea. Its main idea is expressed in the final prayer: the holy martyrs are asked to take special care of the Rostov princes Boris and Gleb Vasilkovich.

4.4. The eulogy of Leo Philologist (1530s) also has a special structure and a special idea. Leo showed the victory of the forces of good (Christianity), personified by Michael and Fedor, over the forces of evil (devil), personified in Batu. This victory for Leo is a turning point in the entire history of Rus', which remained under Orthodoxy.

The magnificent rhetoric of Leo Philologist had a strong influence on the SMF as part of the Degree Book (1560 – 1563) and because of the latter – on the SMF as part of the Illustrated Chronicle (1568 – 1576).

5. All works and all their variants were created in the territory of north-eastern Russia (later the Moscow state). The number of versions of the text that existed at the same time, opens the prospect of seeking for regional versions of the SMF.

There was no local memory of Michael and Fedor in Ukraine, the first work on this topic was published in Kyiv by Dimitry Tuptal (as part of his Menaion for reading).

6. The sources for the compiling SMF are the well-known Laurentian and Hypatian chronicles – the stories about the campaign of Batu and the death of Prince Michael Vsevolodovich. Later SMF texts used later chronicles with their characteristic errors, in particular, Pachomius Serb relied on the SMF as part of the most recent chronicle of the 1460s, and Dimitry Tuptalo used the Synopsis (also the most recent historical work at the time).

Other written sources include the Bible and ancient hagiographic works. In particular, the SMF has a direct quote from the Tale of St. Boris and Gleb. Parallels to the SMF can be traced in the sufferings of St. James of Persia and St. Panteleimon. It is hoped that other hagiographic sources of the SMF will be identified.

7. Due to their relatively late origins (several decades after the event), even the oldest texts of the SMF cannot be considered as a source for the events of the mid-13th century. These oldest texts contain numerous anachronisms and use late terminology.

The authors of later revisions of ancient texts had no additional factual material and showed an increasingly poor understanding of the realities of the 13th century, making up for it with their own fantasies and rhetorical inserts.

8. The general direction of development of the texts of the SMF during the 14 – 17 centuries was to increase the volume by expanding the presentation of Christian doctrine (which was probably the most important goal of all versions of the SMF), pious dialogues, short eulogies and emotional exclamations.

It is also very clear the sharpening of anti-Tatar rhetoric, the accumulation of worse and worse abusive words addressed to the Tatars and Batu personally.

This provides good material for the history of Great Russian literature, as well as for historiography (history of views on the past) and the history of religious and political ideas.

## Historiography

### Lev Dmitriev (1970)

This Leningrad researcher wrote a section "Storytelling in the biographical monuments of the late 13 – 15 centuries" in the collective monograph "[The origins of Russian fiction](#)" [Leningrad: Nauka, 1970, p. 208 – 262]. He considered the SMF in the p. 212 – 216, the origin of the texts he did not touch, referring to the book by N. I. Serebryansky.

### Vladimir Kuchkin (1990)

*Kuchkin V. A. [Mongol-Tatar yoke](#) in the coverage of ancient Russian scribes: 13 – 1 half 14 centuries. – "Russian culture in the conditions of foreign invasions and wars 10 – beginning 20 centuries», M., 1990, vol. 1, p. 15 – 69.*

### Vadim Stavysky (1992 – 2021)

V. S. returned to the topic of the SMF from 1992 to 2021, so for (for today) 29 years.

- (1) *Stavysky V.* [On the question of the beginning of the cult](#) the pious prince Michael of Chernihiv and his boyar Fedor. – "1000 years of the Chernihiv Diocese", Chernihiv, 1992.
- (2) *Stavysky V. I.* [Kyiv and Kyiv chronicles in the 13th century](#). – K.: Kyiv-Mohyla Academy editorial house, 2005. – 107 p.
- (3) *Stavysky V. I.* [«The empire of this world»](#). – Ruthenica, 2017, vol. 14, p. 207 – 214.
- (4) *Stavysky V. I.* [About the semantic load](#) ritual "worship of the bush." – "Eastern Europe in antiquity and the Middle Ages", M., 2020, vol. 32, p. 198 – 202.
- (5) *Stavysky V. I.* [About the formation of life tradition](#) glorification of Prince Michael of Chernihiv (origin of texts). – Ruthenica, 2021, vol. 16, p. 44 – 61.
- (6) *Stavysky V. I.* [On the question of sources](#) Vvedensky synodikon of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. – Ruthenica, 2021, vol. 16, p. 166 – 171.

### Sergey Pavlenko (1996)

*Pavlenko S.* [Prince Michael of Chernihiv](#) and his challenge to the Horde. – Chernihiv: 1996. – 79 p.

### Vladimir Rudakov (2009)

*Rudakov V. N.* [Mongol-Tatars](#) through the eyes of ancient Russian scribes of the mid 13 – 15 centuries. – M.: Quadriga, 2009. – 258 p.

### Maria Antonova and Ekaterina Ivanova (2013)

*Antonova M. V., Ivanova E. M.* [The specifics of the plot topos](#) "The passions of the saint" in "The Tale of the Murder in the Horde of Prince Michael of Chernigov and his Boyar Fedor." – Bulletin of Bryansk State University. Series History / Literary Studies / Law / Linguistics, 2013, № 2 (2), p. 175 – 179.

### Nadiya Milutenko (2016)

*Milyutenko N. I.* [Tale about Michael Chernigovsky](#). – Proceedings of the Department of Ancient Russian Literature (St. Petersburg), 2016, vol. 64, p. 180 – 198.

## Conclusions

Over the century since the publication of N. Serebryansky's basic monograph (1915), the historiography of the subject has gone through two distinct stages of development. The first of them lasted until August 24, 1991, ie until the proclamation of Ukraine's independence. The second stage began with the proclamation of Ukraine's independence and continues to this day.

Traditionally, we see that the science of history does not have its own forces for development, and adapts to current political conditions. I believe that historical science in Russia should also be grateful to Ukraine for declaring independence, because the academic freedom that came to Russia and has been partially preserved to this day is due to the positive political changes of 1991. (I'm not talking about other freedoms in Russia – modern Russians want nothing but the rebuilding of the All-Union prison in every detail. They don't care about freedom of scientific research, because it's neither a TV nor a refrigerator.)

Historians have taken advantage of new opportunities provided by the abolition of the All-Union march, and research in the our specific field has significantly increased in the last 30 years. There are three main areas of study.

**Archaeographic direction** showed that the possibilities of studying already known manuscripts are far from exhausting. Important clarifications are provided by research on the composition of manuscript collections containing SMF, the time of their occurrence and their places of residence. The situation with the publication of texts is worse.

**Source study direction** studies are based on already published texts. Attempts to reconstruct the origin of the SMF show a great variety of hypotheses (to which I added my own). Many literary parallels to the SMF have been identified. Regarding the source value of the SMF, two groups of estimates have been outlined: some researchers try to see in the SMF the features of a real event in the middle of the 13th century, others pronounce epy cautious about this realism (I take this extreme point of view).

**Literary direction** studios, oddly enough, are represented so far the weakest. I would like to see the history of Michael and Fedor in all its literary evolution (up to and including modern historical novels), in all its connections with previous, modern and subsequent hagiography, to see how literary technique and tastes have changed.

Finally, I would like someone to compare the Tales of Michael and Fedor with Boris Polevoy's "The Tale of the Real Man" and determine whether socialist realism really dates back to the early 20th century or whether it stems from old-fashioned hagiography.

## **List of abbreviations**

**VL** – Resurrection Chronicle [PSRL, 1856, vol. 7; SMF – s. 152 – 156].  
+ 52 records more.